

## Research Findings

### Details of Research Findings

- There is little connection between score gains and participation in CSR. Several factors impeded the researchers' ability to fully determine the effects of CSR on student achievement. Lack of baseline data, lack of K–3 classes at pre-CSR sizes for comparison and no state testing of kindergarten and first grade—as well as a host of simultaneous state reforms implemented about the same time—were among the obstacles to performing the evaluation.
- While implementation was rapid, overcrowded schools serving high percentages of low-income and minority students were the slowest to implement reductions. These are the students that research has shown benefit most from smaller classes. Teacher and facility shortages were key barriers to participation, as well as insufficient state funding to pay for both
- Hiring of K–3 teachers increased 46 percent in the first 3 years. This led to a rise in the percentage of K–3 teachers who are not fully credentialed, from 1.8 percent before CSR to 12.5 percent in the second year.
- Novice teachers and those without full credentials are concentrated in schools with the highest proportions of low-income and minority students. Despite a widespread belief that teachers left disadvantaged schools for more desirable jobs, the data suggest that the amount of such migration was small. Instead, the concentration appears to be due primarily to schools inability to hire credentialed teachers from the pool of new teachers
- Teachers in the smaller classes report fewer behavior problems and an ability to give more individual attention to students. They did not report changing what or how they taught or how quickly they were able to move through the curriculum.

Most districts report operating expenses exceeding state payments, a problem that has recently worsened. Districts cover the shortfall with maintenance or administrative funds, or with cuts in professional development, computer, or library funds. More districts are projecting budget shortfalls next year and a few are discussing cutting back on CSR.